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THE SHADOW 3 OF 4
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THE Shadow
IN THE COILS OF LEVIATHAN
KALUTA · GOSS · GIANNI

THE Shadow™

IN THE COILS OF LEVIATHAN

A Shadow Adventure in Four Parts

PART THREE

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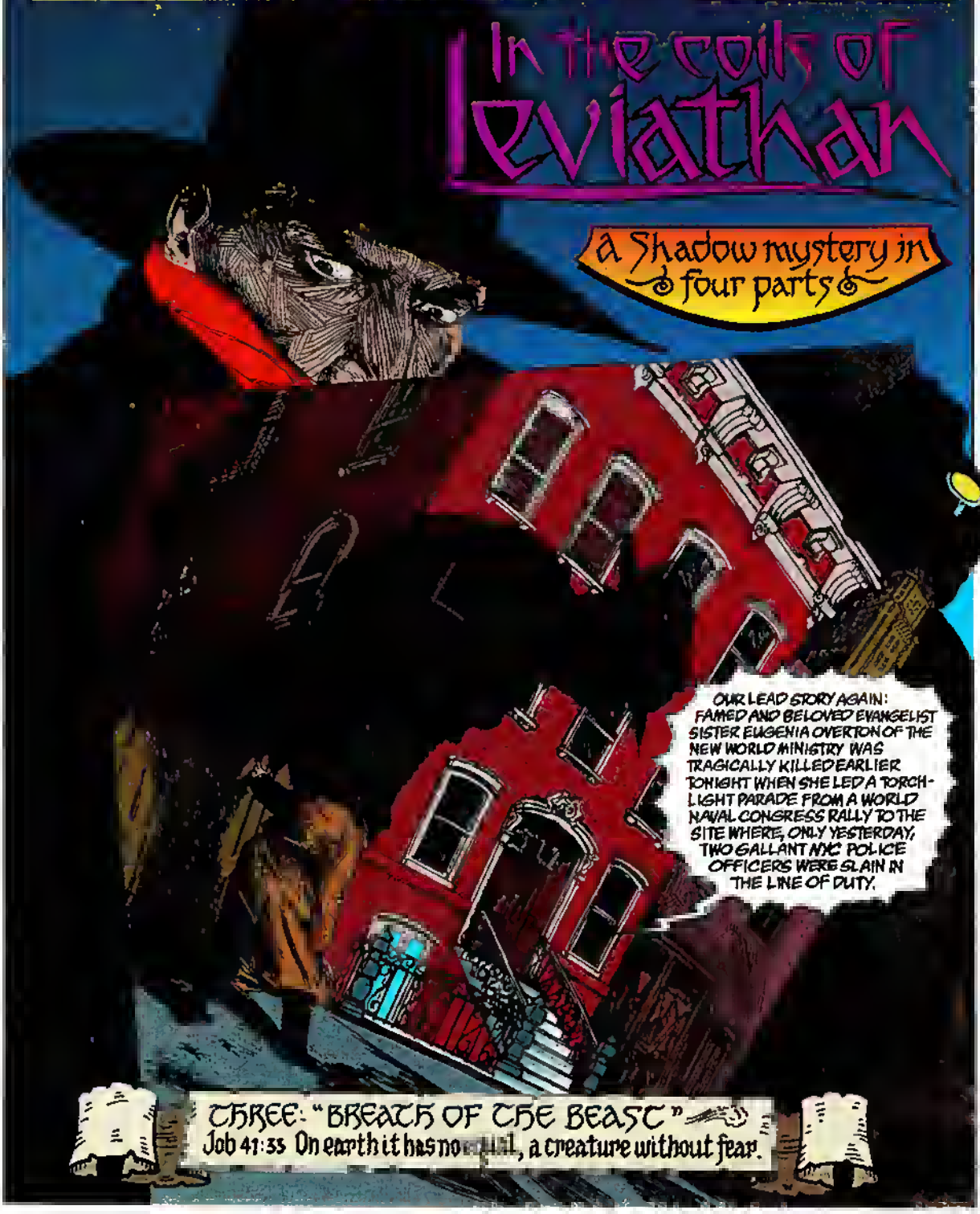
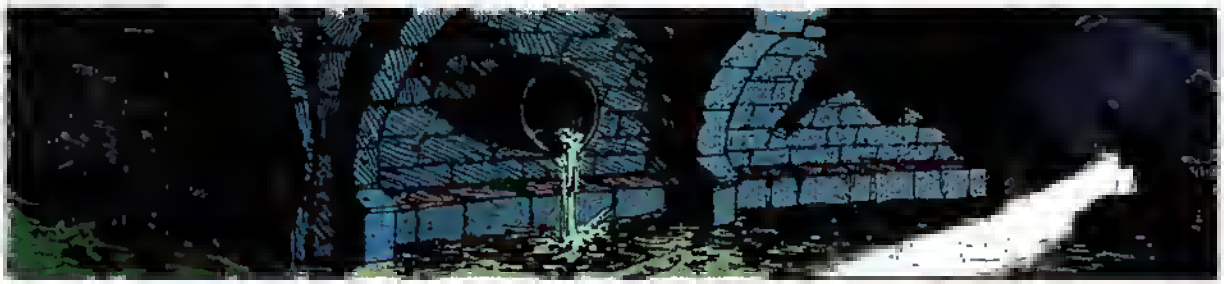
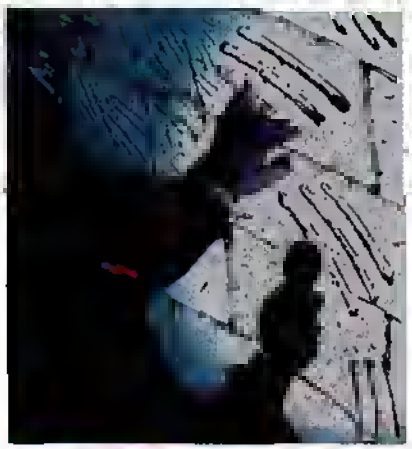
In the coils of Leviathan

a Shadow mystery in four parts

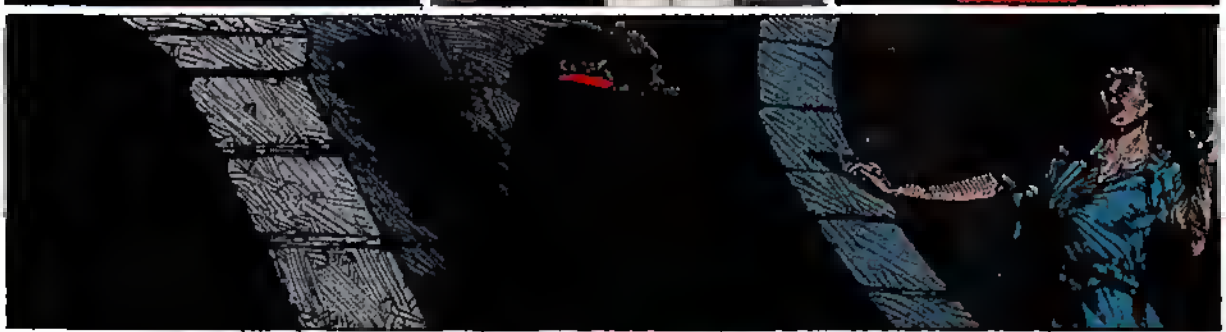


TWO GALLON! MORE LIKE TWO BIT.
OFFICIALS ARE DOWNPLAYING REPORTS LINKING THIS TO A SERIES OF OTHER VIOLENT ATTACKS PLAGUING LOWER MANHATTAN...
SHADDAP ALREADY!
...HOWEVER, SISTER EUGENIA WAS IN TOWN FOR THE WNC, TAKING TIME OFF FROM HER TOUR OF MAJOR U.S. CITIES, AND SPECULATION HAS BEEN RUNNING RAMPANT.
MEANWHILE THE WORLD NAVAL INVESTIGATION, LED BY A RUSSIAN TEAM, HAS DECLARED THAT THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THESE INCIDENTS ARE ANYTHING OTHER THAN RANDOM, ISOLATED INSTANCES OF UNSTABLE INDIVIDUALS.
AS IF THERE AIN'T ENOUGH GOING ON DOWN THERE, SHEESH!
WHAT THE--!
ANYBODY GOT A LIGHT?
SISTER ELLEN OVERTON IS STILL MISSING. REPORTS THAT SHE WAS WITH HER MOTHER AT THE TIME OF THE ATTACK LEAD POLICE TO FEAR THE WORST.
MEANWHILE, FURTHER FANTASTIC DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CASE ARE...
GEEZO, FRANKIE, I ALMOST PLUGGED YA!
THIS AIN'T NO TIME TO BE SNEAKIN' UP ON NOBODY.
...BEING LOOKED INTO BY THE CITY AS POLICE SWITCHBOARDS ARE DELUGED...
DON'T I KNOW IT! I TOOK A VANISHIN' POWDER FROM THE HOSPITAL SO'S NOT TO SPILL TO THE BULLS.
'SPECIALLY WHEN THEY WAS BOUND T' QUESTION ME ABOUT THE DRAGON I SEEN.
...WITH A TIDAL WAVE OF FRANTIC CALLS FROM A BADLY FRIGHTENED AND OVERWROUGHT POPULACE.





USADE FOR SALVATION!
Hear
list Sister Eugeni
Address
World Nav
NEW WORLD M



UHHH?!
GOOD TO SEE YOU ALIVE, MA'AM.
COME WITH US.

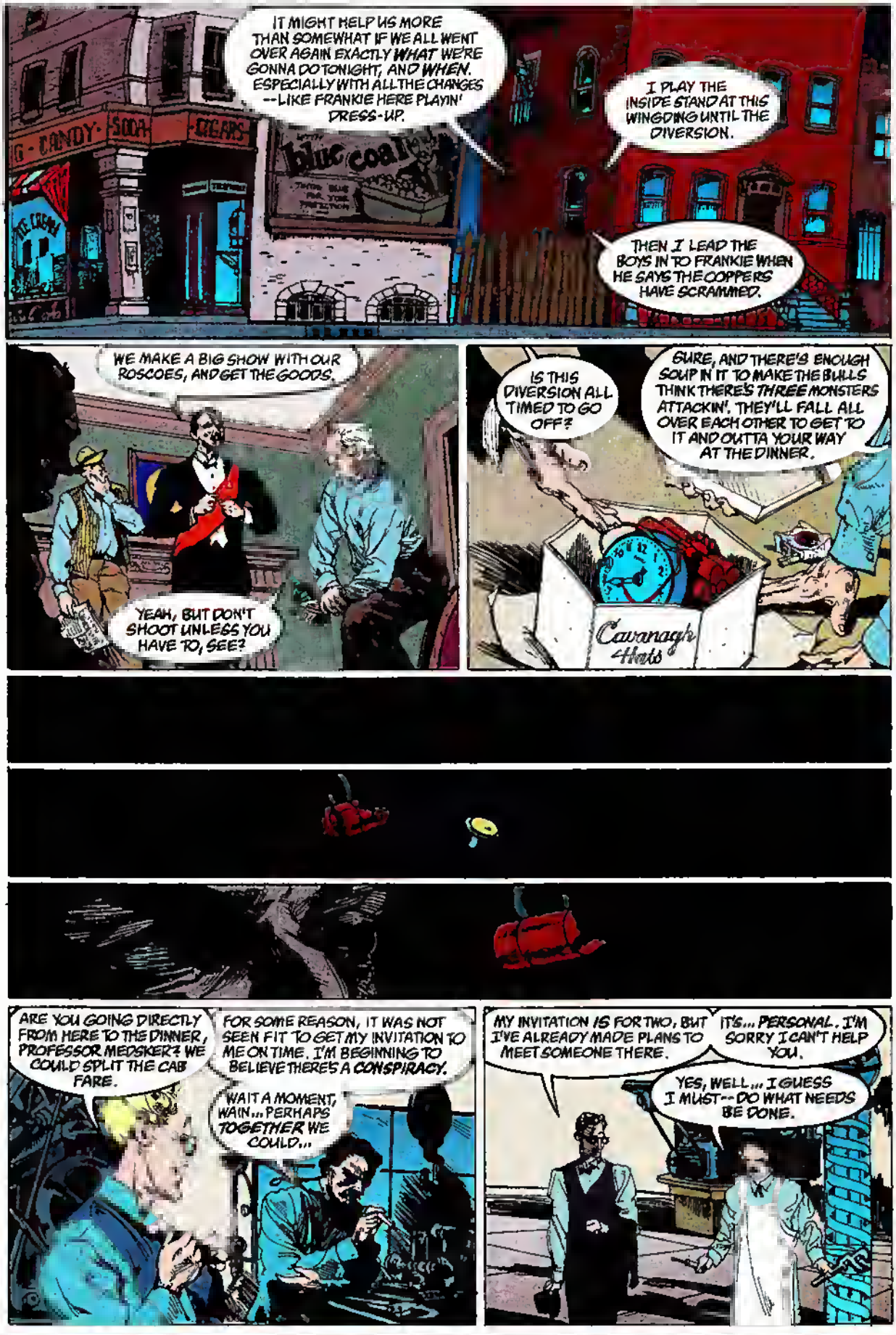
MY MOTHER...?
I'M AFRAID NOT.
OH...
IT'S ONLY A SHORT DRIVE...
WE'LL TAKE YOU TO WHERE SHE IS.
MORGUE
SISTER ELLEN! SISTER!
SISTER--WHAT HAPPENED?
COULD YOU TELL OUR READERS, SISTER?
I--I CAN'T... MY MOTHER...IT WAS...
P.D.
IT WAS SOMETHING OUT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT--THE BOOK OF JOB. LEVIATHAN. "LAY HANDS ON IT; THINK OF THE BATTLE; YOU WILL NOT DO IT AGAIN! ANY HOPE OF CAPTURING IT WILL BE DISAPPOINTED; WERE NOT EVEN THE GODS OVERWHELMED AT THE SIGHT OF IT?"
"NO ONE IS SO FIERCE AS TO DARE TO STIR IT UP. WHO CAN STAND BEFORE IT? WHO CAN CONFRONT IT AND BE SAFE--UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN, WHO?
"I WILL NOT KEEP SILENCE CONCERNING ITS LIMBS, OR ITS MIGHTY STRENGTH, OR ITS SPLENDID FRAME. WHO CAN STRIP OFF ITS OUTER GARMENT? WHO CAN PENETRATE ITS DOUBLE COAT OF MAIL? WHO CAN OPEN THE DOORS OF ITS FACE? THERE IS TERROR ALL AROUND ITS TEETH."

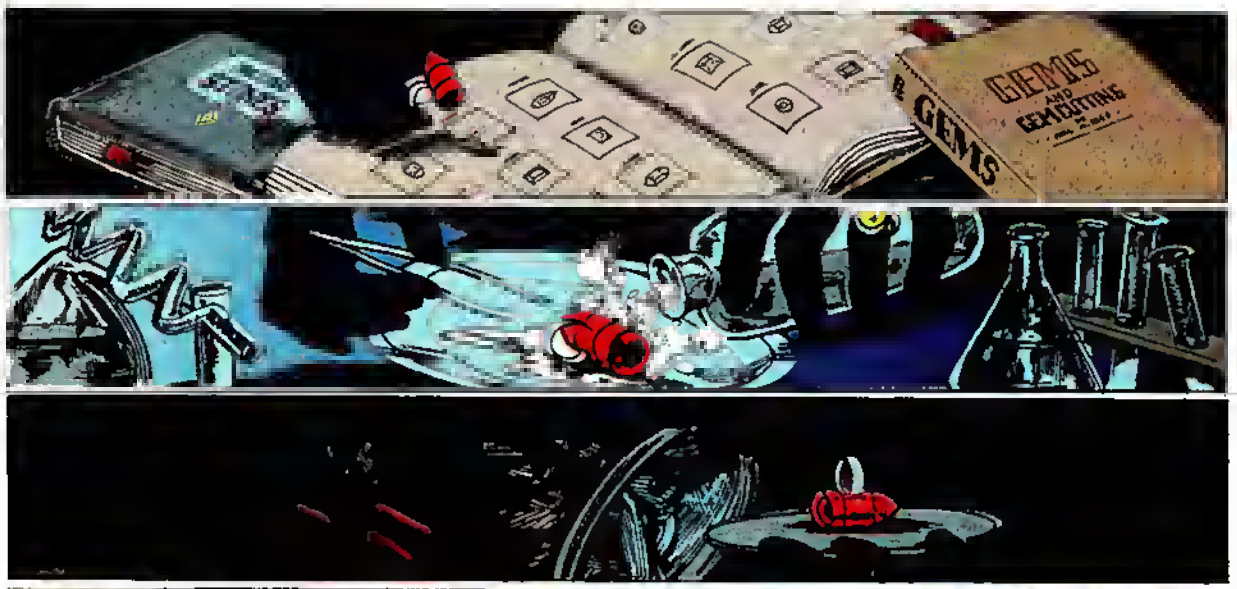
"ITS BACK IS MADE OF SHIELDS IN ROWS, SHUT UP CLOSELY AS WITH A SEAL. ONE IS SO NEAR TO ANOTHER THAT NO AIR CAN COME BETWEEN THEM. THEY ARE JOINED ONE TO ANOTHER; THEY CLASP EACH OTHER AND CANNOT BE SEPARATED."
"ITS SNEEZES FLASH FORTH LIGHT, AND ITS EYES ARE LIKE THE EYELIDS OF THE DAWN. FROM ITS MOUTH GO FLAMING TORCHES; SPARKS OF FIRE LEAP OUT. OUT OF ITS NOSTRILS COMES SMOKE, AS FROM A BOILING POT AND BURNING RUSHES. ITS BREATH KINDLES COALS, AND A FLAME COMES OUT OF ITS MOUTH."
"IN ITS NECK ABIDES STRENGTH, AND TERROR DANCES BEFORE IT. THE FOLDS OF ITS FLESH CLING TOGETHER; IT IS FIRMLY CAST AND IMMOVABLE. ITS HEART IS AS HARD AS STONE, AS HARD AS THE LOWER MILLSTONE. WHEN IT RAISES UP THE GODS ARE AFRAID..."

"THOUGH THE SWORD REACHES IT, IT DOES NOT AVAIL, NOR DOES THE SPEAR, THE DART, OR THE JAVELIN... IT COUNTS IRON AS STRAW, AND BRONZE AS ROTTEN WOOD..."
"THE ARROW CANNOT MAKE IT FLEE..."
"...IT LAUGHS AT THE RATTLE OF JAVELINS..."
"ON EARTH IT HAS NO EQUAL,--"
"--A CREATURE WITHOUT FEAR."
WHEW!
YOU MAY VIEW THE BODY NOW.

SISTER!
SISTER ELLEN!
CAN WE GET A PHOTO, SISTER?
PLEASE, NO MORE.
HOLD IT!
THAT DOES IT.
LISTEN, YOU YEGGS.
IF YOU DON'T SHOW A LITTLE RESPECT, I'LL THROW THE LOT OF YOU IN THE POKEY. AND I DON'T MEAN MAYBE.
A MOMENT OF SILENCE, PLEASE. THEN I HAVE TO TALK TO SISTER ELLEN.
I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE, INSPECTOR. I HAVE TO SPEAK TO YOU.
C'MERE.

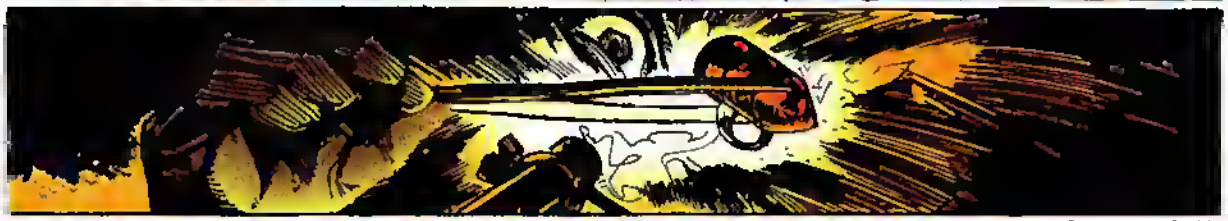
I'VE A BIT OF NEWS FOR YOU -- WE FOUND OUT THAT WITNESS OF OURS THAT LAMMED FROM THE HOSPITAL IS A BIG-TIME CHICAGO JEWEL THIEF. WE HAVEN'T LET ANYONE KNOW HE'S BEEN TAGGED, AND LEFT THE DETAILS OUT OF THE NEWSPAPERS.
THEM RUSSIANS HAVE BEEN GLOMMING ONTO EVERYTHING WE GET AND MY ORDERS ARE TO KOWTOW TO THEM.
THAT'S SWELL. I'LL GET ON IT RIGHT AWAY
NO. YOU CAN'T CROSS THE RUSSIANS EITHER.
SO I WANT YOU TO STICK WITH SISTER ELLEN. ASK YOUR QUESTIONS, SEE IF SHE CAN GIVE US ANY MORE DETAILS. WE KNOW THAT THE ATTACK WAS PROBABLY NOT TIED TO HER IN ANY WAY, BUT THERE'S NO HARM IN CHECKING.
PLAY IT RIGHT, AND THIS COULD BE YOUR BEST CHANCE AT AN EARLY PROMOTION, JOE.
I'M NO BABYSITTER. I'M SUPPOSED TO BE A COP.
AND A COP FOLLOWS ORDERS. YOU HAVE YOURS.
OKAY, EVERYBODY OUT. SISTER ELLEN NEEDS SOME TIME WITH HER MOTHER. OUT!
DO YOU MIND IF I STAY?
NO, THANK YOU, OFFICER.
To the victims of the Holocaust


IT MIGHT HELP US MORE THAN SOMEWHAT IF WE ALL WENT OVER AGAIN EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE GONNA DO TONIGHT, AND WHEN. ESPECIALLY WITH ALL THE CHANGES --LIKE FRANKIE HERE PLAYIN' DRESS-UP.
I PLAY THE INSIDE STAND AT THIS WINGDING UNTIL THE DIVERSION.
THEN I LEAD THE BOYS IN TO FRANKIE WHEN HE SAYS THE COPPERS HAVE SCRAMMED.
CANDY
SODA
CIGARS
blue coal
WE MAKE A BIG SHOW WITH OUR ROSCOES, AND GET THE GOODS.
YEAH, BUT DON'T SHOOT UNLESS YOU HAVE TO, SEE?
IS THIS DIVERSION ALL TIMED TO GO OFF?
SURE, AND THERE'S ENOUGH SOUP IN IT TO MAKE THE BULLS THINK THERE'S THREE MONSTERS ATTACKIN'. THEY'LL FALL ALL OVER EACH OTHER TO GET TO IT AND OUTTA YOUR WAY AT THE DINNER.
Cavanagh Hats
ARE YOU GOING DIRECTLY FROM HERE TO THE DINNER, PROFESSOR MEDSKER? WE COULD SPLIT THE CAB FARE.
FOR SOME REASON, IT WAS NOT SEEN FIT TO GET MY INVITATION TO ME ON TIME. I'M BEGINNING TO BELIEVE THERE'S A CONSPIRACY.
WAIT A MOMENT, WAIN... PERHAPS TOGETHER WE COULD...
MY INVITATION IS FOR TWO, BUT I'VE ALREADY MADE PLANS TO MEET SOMEONE THERE.
IT'S... PERSONAL. I'M SORRY I CAN'T HELP YOU.
YES, WELL... I GUESS I MUST -- DO WHAT NEEDS BE DONE.

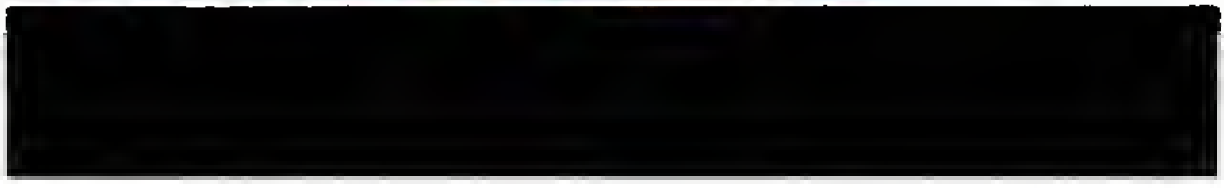

GEMS
GEMS AND GEMOLOGY

I STILL DON'T THINK THEY'LL SWALLOW ME BEIN' A FANCY-PANTS, THOUGH. I GOT ALL THESE CUTS AND SCRAPES.
YOU'LL BE JAKE. THESE TRAMBOS DON'T LOOK AT THE HELP. JUST REMEMBER TO··WHATIGIT··SERVE FROM THE LEFT.

BESIDES, YOU CAN BE GIVING ALL THE JEWELS AND BAUBLES THE ONCE OVER. SAVE TIME WHEN THE BOYS CRASH IN.
THAT'S WHAT THE BOSS IS SUPPOSED TO BE DOIN' IN WID THE GUESTS. I'LL DO IT, BUT I'D RATHER WORK WITH THE BOMB.



GEMS



WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' BACK HERE, INSPECTOR? I THOUGHT THE CAPTAIN HAD YOU CHAPERONIN' THAT SISTER E N.
SHE HADDA REST UP. SOME HOITY-TOITY PARTY FOR THE NAVAL CONGRESS. THE CAP'LL BE THERE, LET HIM BABYSIT HER. WHERE'S THAT PACKET OF PERSONAL EFFECTS FROM THE EVANGELIST?
ON YOUR DESK, NEXT TO THE EASTER BASKET.
the attention of the Inspec
WHATCHA DOIN' WITH THEM EGGS THIS TIME OF YEAR, INSPECTOR?
LAY OFF, CARNEY. SAY, THIS IS ADDRESSED TO ME.
CRUSADE FOR SALVATION!
Hear
Evangelist Si
Eugenia Overton
the
Congress
on a
Coast-to-Coast Radio Hookup
Ye Miserable Sinners!
Inspector
witness who escaped
the hospital room
this address
239
Washington
WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?
TAMPER WITH EVIDENCE? NOT ME...
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN ON THE BODY-- WE AIN'T TOUCHED IT.
THEN I BETTER CHECK THIS OUT.

THAT'S RIGHT, THAT ANONYMOUS TIP PAID OFF -- IT'S LIKE A THIEVES' CONVENTION HERE, I TELL YA. ROUND UP EVERYBODY YOU CAN AND SEND 'EM OVER WITH THE WAGONS.
WHAT? WELL, TAKE 'EM OFF THE NAVAL DINNER, I NEED 'EM HERE.
WAIT A MINUTE, SOMEBODY'S PULLIN' UP. LOOKS IMPORTANT. DO WHAT YOU CAN -- I'M GONNA TRY TO LISTEN TO THIS.
blue coal
SO WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WE HAD A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE UNION, AND I'VE COME TO TELL YOU THAT THE SEWER WORKERS'VE HAD ENOUGH.
OH YEAH?
YEAH... WE'RE READY TO PLAY BALL WITH YOU. AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGMENT, WE'LL KNUCKLE UNDER TO YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION. WHATEVER YOU WANT, IT'S YOURS, BUT THE KILLINGS'VE GOTTA QUIT. STOP TERRORIZING MY MEN.
LISTEN, PAL, WE GOT TROUBLES ENOUGH WITHOUT GOING LOOKIN' FOR IT. WE AIN'T BEEN MUSCLIN' YOU. NOT A CHANCE DO WE WANT ANY PART OF YOUR UNION OR YOUR SEWERS.
WHAT?
YOU GOTTA BE ALIVE TO SIPHON OFF A UNION PENSION FUND. UH-UH. TOO DANGEROUS FOR US.
THANKS, BUT NO THANKS. NOW, TAKE A POWDER.
WE'RE BUSY JUST NOW.

IT'S SISTER ELLEN. I'M SUPPOSED TO MEET WAIN HERE. WE'RE GOING TO THE WORLD CONGRESS DINNER...
MY ASSISTANT ISN'T HERE. HE SAID HE WAS MEETING SOMEONE AT THE DINNER. BUT, SINCE YOU'RE HERE...
...I'LL TAKE YOU. OH YES... BE RIGHT BACK.
COME ON, COME ON. OH, CRAP, I DIDN'T...!
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS.
POLICE! OUT! I NEED TO USE THAT PHONE.
OPERATOR! GET ME WAVERLY 9-4200!

HELLO...
HONEY?
I DON'T THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO KEEP OUR DATE
IS THIS IT?
THIS IS PLENTY. WE'LL GET 'EM.
TELEPHONE
WE BETTER.
NOW, I WANT AT LEAST THREE MEN AT EACH DOOR, AND A COUPLE OTHERS COVERIN' THE ALLEY AND THE BASEMENT. I THINK THERE'S AN ACCESS TO THE SEWERS DOWN THERE, TOO... PUT A MAN ON THAT. EVERYBODY ELSE, SPREAD OUT AROUND THE BUILDING.
IF WE BUTTON THIS UP RIGHT, NOBODY'LL GET HURT.
NOBODY WILL GET IN OR OUTTA THIS JOINT WITHOUT MY SAY SO.

WELL, THERE IT IS, FRANKIE--ARMED AND READY TO DETONATE, SO TAKE IT EASY--
HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH
WHAT THE HELL?
OWW!

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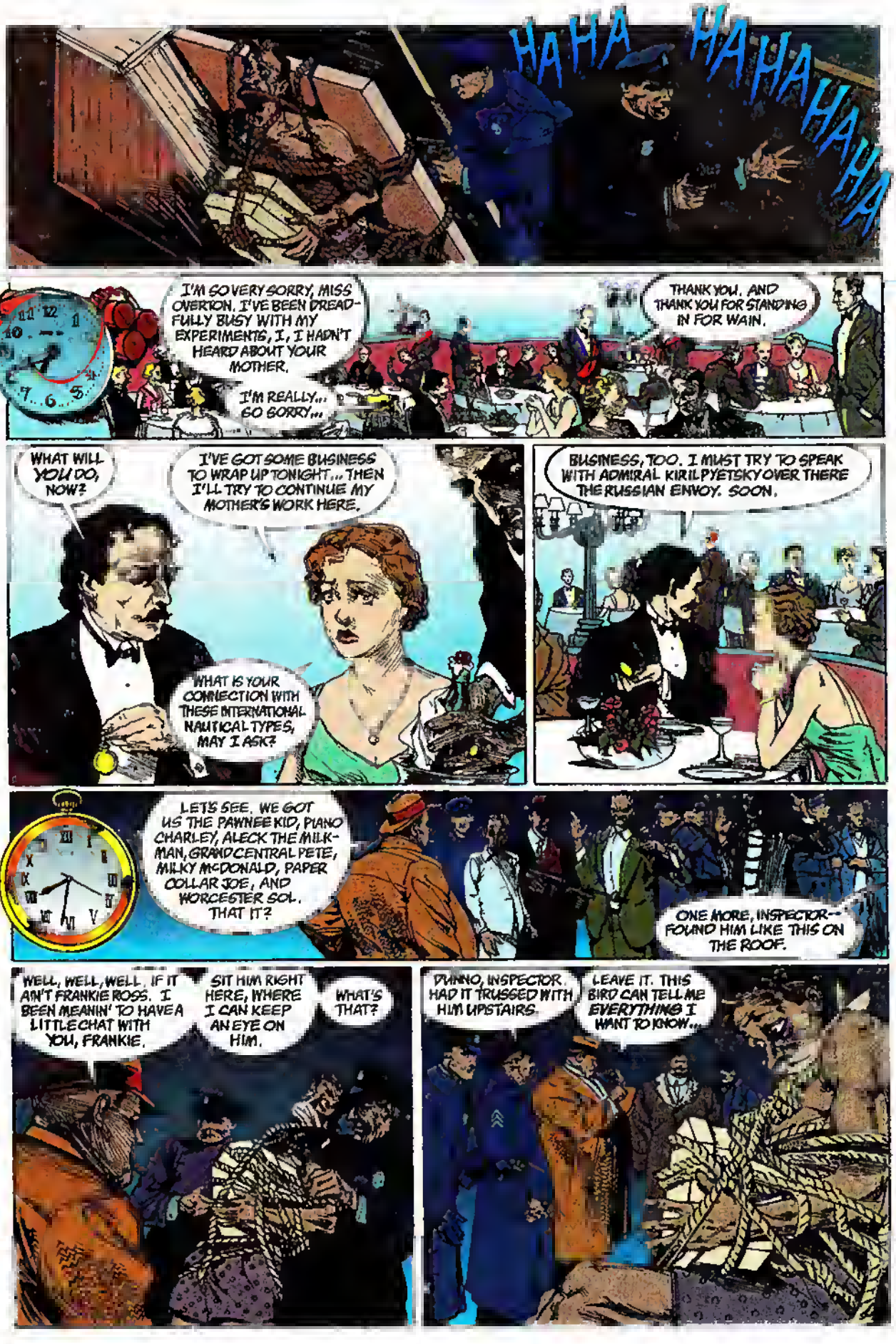
THERE! GET HIM!
KABLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!

HOLY JEEZ!
GUNFIRE! HIT THE DECK!
WHAT THE--
BLAST 'EM!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
THIS DON'T FIGURE...
THIS PLACE'S BEEN CHEWED UP! YOU FOUND ANY MORE LIVE ONES?
WE'VE FOUND LOTS O' NOTHING, SARGE.
THERE'S STILL THE ROOF...
YEAH...
I HATE THIS PART.
KU-WHUMP!


HA HA HA HA HA HA
I'M SO VERY SORRY, MISS OVERTON. I'VE BEEN DREADFULLY BUSY WITH MY EXPERIMENTS, I, I HADN'T HEARD ABOUT YOUR MOTHER.
I'M REALLY... SO SORRY...
THANK YOU. AND THANK YOU FOR STANDING IN FOR WAIN.
WHAT WILL YOU DO, NOW?
I'VE GOT SOME BUSINESS TO WRAP UP TONIGHT... THEN I'LL TRY TO CONTINUE MY MOTHER'S WORK HERE.
WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION WITH THESE INTERNATIONAL NAUTICAL TYPES, MAY I ASK?
BUSINESS, TOO. I MUST TRY TO SPEAK WITH ADMIRAL KIRILPYETSKY OVER THERE THE RUSSIAN ENVOY. SOON.
LET'S SEE. WE GOT US THE PAWNEE KID, PIANO CHARLEY, ALECK THE MILKMAN, GRAND CENTRAL PETE, MILKY MCDONALD, PAPER COLLAR JOE, AND WORCESTER SOL. THAT IT?
ONE MORE, INSPECTOR-- FOUND HIM LIKE THIS ON THE ROOF.
WELL, WELL, WELL. IF IT AIN'T FRANKIE ROSS. I BEEN MEANIN' TO HAVE A LITTLE CHAT WITH YOU, FRANKIE.
SIT HIM RIGHT HERE, WHERE I CAN KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.
WHAT'S THAT?
DUNNO, INSPECTOR. HAD IT TRUSSED WITH HIM UPSTAIRS.
LEAVE IT. THIS BIRD CAN TELL ME EVERYTHING I WANT TO KNOW...

I AM DMITRI PETOVSKY. I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE INFORMATION DIRECTLY PERTAINING TO OUR OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION.
AND I SEE YOU HAVE ONE OF OUR COMRADES. YOU WILL PLEASE TURN HIM OVER TO OUR CUSTODY.
WHAT? YOU'RE SAYIN' FRANKIE HERE IS ONE OF YOU? I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
BELIEVE HIS PASSPORT AND CREDENTIALS, THEN. IF YOU STILL DOUBT, YOU MAY CHECK WITH YOUR COMMANDER. IN MEANTIME... WE GO.
HEY! YOU MAHONIES CAN'T--
NIX. WHAT CAN WE DO WITHOUT WE CAUSE A INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT THING?
INSPECTOR?
WE LET HIM GO. FOR NOW. ORDERS. WE BUSTED UP WHATEVER GAME HE WAS AT, BUT STILL-- I HATE IT WHEN POLITICS WALKS ALL OVER JUSTICE.
DAMN.
LET'S GET THESE OTHERS DOWNTOWN.
WHAT IS THIS NOW? I STILL HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO CATCH THEIR ATTENTION.
PERHAPS IF YOU WENT OVER AND WAITED. I'LL BE FINE... REMEMBER, I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE MYSELF.
OF COURSE.
THEY'RE LEAVING! DOOMED. I'LL, I'LL JUST HAVE TO GET THEIR ATTENTION SOME OTHER WAY.

HOLD HIM STILL. REMOVE HIS GAG.
PERHAPS BEFORE YOU ARE DISPOSED OF, YOU CAN TELL US THE MEANING OF THIS.
Дурák.
Cavanagh Hats
THE BOX! THE BOX! IT'S A BOMB!
DON'T--!
OHHHHOOOOOH
WAKE HIM. CLEAN HIM UP. MAKE CERTAIN HE UNDERSTANDS HIS POSI-TION.
TELL HIM IT IS TIME WE TOOK OFF... "KID GLOVES".
I--I CAN LEAVE?
NEVER MIND, TOVARITCH. NOW THAT YOU REMEMBER YOUR LOYALTIES YOU WILL HAVE A CLEAR HEAD TO COMPLETE YOUR MISSION.
WE WILL PERMIT ONE MORE ATTEMPT ON YOUR PART, ROSKOFF. IT WILL BE YOUR FINAL.
TAKE CARE, COMRADE.

CLUNK!
THAT'LL SHOW YOU WHO'S CRAZY!
RZZZZZZZZ
RZZZZZZZ
I INVENTED IT... I PERFECTED IT... AND NOW YOU ALL WANT IT!
RZZZZZZZZZ
BUT YOU'LL NEVER GET THE SECRET FROM ME! YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY...
WHOOF!
KRAACK!
RROWWRR!
NEXT.. FINAL ISSUE: THE RING OF FIRE!

Sun-crowned and strange, the metallic music of Day is in constant metamorphosis—though listened to closely, the various strands part into

fundamental identifiable rhythms. In full daylight, the Exceptional Moment is not one of startling sound (as it is in the Night) but Unexpected Silence, happening so seldom that every person notices, so quick there's no chance to comment except with a glance toward the surrounding, glancing strangers. An ellipsis...as of all sound leaving, a pulling-apart like dancers from the ballroom floor in intrigued expectation of the better couple too shy to dance. There is the urge to laugh, to point into the empty silence now given dimension...all wait through their interrupted movement, breath held, for Sound to bleed back into the daylight world. Where it went, and how more than quiet the silence was, is lost as the pocket of infinity closes again.

The city-pulse so noticeable in the quiet hours is hidden within the cacophony of multiple coinciding energies overwritten by the thundering echelons of inconsideration. The city's confident swagger is backed by the hunched shoulder against the Amaranthine Wheel. The WHY of this daily spectacle is orchestrated through mutual consent between Those That Do, and the City Itself... When the City's greased rails carry their accustomed traffic to and fro, and the slickened bodies, taking pleasure in honest sweat—mildly curs-

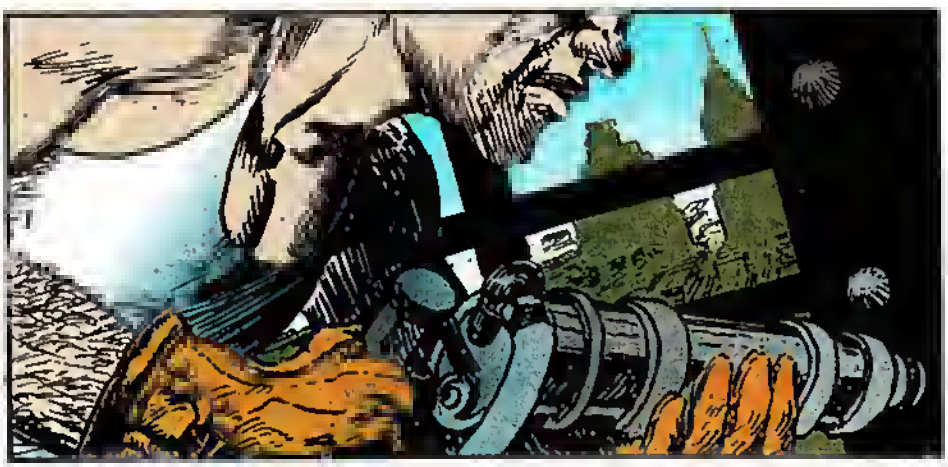
ing the rain, move on purpose with purpose, coming and going, pinpoints of Focus pace the bisected map, easing the attributable energies over the counter, totaling into the tally of Hours, spent and collected to be spent again. No one walks the iron roads checkered by these unconscious patterns or paces the corridors woven on the Loom of Noon without carrying a burden of substance or dream, propelling the engine of Advancement from one place into the future. The unaccompanied idler leaning into the torrent may earn an expression, a negligible seed with no fallow time to germinate into irritation, thrown over a retreating, otherwise tolerant, back. The footfall that follows the Wheel of Industry is pressed more definitely against the unresponsive flagstones and concrete avenues

impervious to everything but stain.

The Toiling Integer and the Sensitive Heart pass as one, unnoticed, unmarked...to count the passersby is to count without the blessing of a sum—a way of disappearing. The first step toward transparency is to count the large insignificances: bricks, windows, faces. All important as individuals to themselves and so worth a consideration when separated from the whole, or as a hoard, or a movement toward, by the city in its internal listing. Factoring, figuring, totaling, noting, reminding, and forecasting: so many talented hands toiling through the day's diversity, channeling thoughts and memories for the City's daily consumption.

Wreaths of concentric support maintain the Working City. The Worker works and hopes for at least the same reward as yesterday, most doors opening to them in unquestioning encouragement of their forward progress—for a fee...a small fee (as cynics note and report for the benefit of the cynical choir leaning on the bent backs of the honestly curious). It is only during the coffee break or the last three minutes of the harried lunch time that thoughts return to the morning bed-anger and alarm-clock fantasies, the awareness of the drain that the end of the day, very few would want to just stop before finishing it, and most actually enjoy the thrum of the event. As the counter counts the minutes, the lung expands and contracts without an external awareness—the plan to "do" becomes the urge to accomplish whatever in each's gaze is the encompassed perimeter of endeavor. There is a consciousness of placement—of being where and when one belongs. More than the Night, the daily routine reinforces the idea that the city is Eternal. Each day the street-life moves to the accustomed place at the accustomed pace...not given to the surprising movements accepted by Night. There is a planting, a growing, and harvesting each day—the incessant give and take: waves washing the shore—each unique within its inevitability, followed one upon the other, an implied eternity that reinforces itself. In league with each other, none notice the similarity of each concurrent day, tho' it's not hidden—

As each moves in his own path, so often the path becomes a trail, the trail a way, a road, a thoroughfare, avenue, boulevard with its unchanging landmarks. The other people, seen moving through

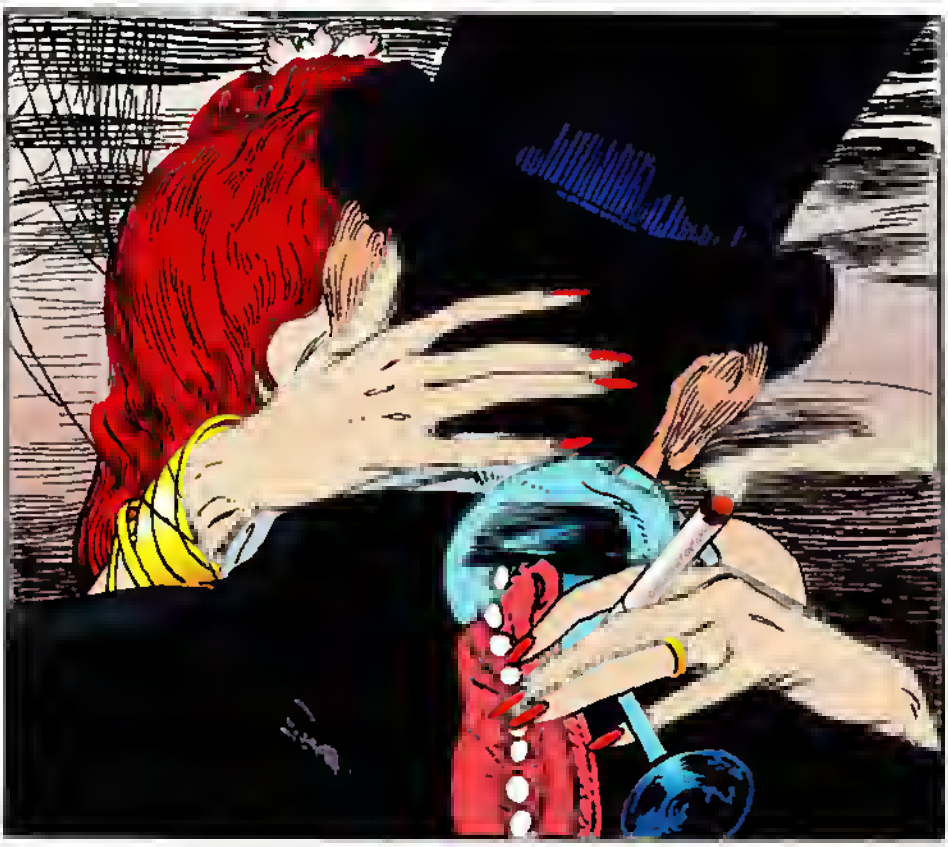


their daytime, the building edges and street corners passed so frequently, evolve into insignificance, numbered by their advancement toward a destination...areas traveled through unremarked except by the consistent tour guide of the mind. The importance is that the fluid moves, carries, delivers, accepts, returns, borrows, lends from the creators to the consumers. Beyond a well-done day trapped by Time into levels of usefulness used, these perturbations are not my concern: Gratification in exchange for Time. Everything is to be lavished on the citizens, except Time. To the daylight city, Time is the dearest coin, kept to itself, an article so truly the measure of wealth. A coin so often squandered by the Night.

As large and loud as is this torrent of the Day, it rushes by with no effect on the insulated warrens of the night-forgiven souls, asleep—some with smiles on their slackening faces, some with blood—asleep, or, feigning sleep, staring through their closed lids during the hours of brightness, prayers holding back the radiant cascade against the fall of night. Curled protectively in Vampire comas, the day-lost souls repine and repent, supine and spent, dreaming, asking the blot on the ceiling whither Demon Night has fled.

I can see The Night, hanging between the forgotten coats in unopened closets, wrapping down around the heating pipes, dripping into basements, settling at last into the drain traps, the overflow valves, and storm conduits—blending with the centuries'

paved-over rivulets that once drained the virgin forest below the streets washed in sunlight, now become evil through neglect, by being forgotten. The Night abides with the Dark, whispering to the ever-present hidden Past. The deep secrets and deadly secretions spiral, blending into repeated successions of rainbow stains across snail-trailed tubes, the root-choked esophagi, the silted brachial veins abandoned by memory, the death-sinks and septic pools glutted with this narcous effluvia indulged by Night in its lost struggle with the coming of Day. Safety in solitude. Gelid-eyed animals of no name nose under the solvent layer of Lost Dark, devouring the shreds of remarkability, mulching the uncut identifiable proofs of existence, rending, tearing, leaving a burrow of mysterious conclusion never meant to rise into the realm of re-contemplation. Stuffed under the weight of years, Fear heavy on its shoulders, the terrific



Midnight sleeps coiled in the pseudopodia of these horrors, one eye open for the shimmer of evening, dreaming that this underworld of immutable Dark may one day return to the cyclic surface.

Haunted by the memory and the pressure from the somnolent Night, the rippled and reflected fingers of the dwindling day scrape through layers of translucence and opacity, flicking aside the veils of fog and charcoal that obscure the questing opal spotlight.

Horizontal sunlight slicing through the dust-laden air etches a last glance across the suddenly empty sidewalk.

As I step forward, my silhouette is pinned to the wall by the lancet of dying light.

Turning toward myself, I see the breadth and depth of the dark.

FINISH LINE

Last month I gave you an example of the interactive nature of comics stories: the way words and pictures interact—with each other and with the readers' own sets of expectations—to create a sense of reality and action in the readers' minds. To me, this has always been one of the most exciting aspects of the medium, and has made this job enjoyable even during times of high stress and impending deadline doom.

I thought this month I'd let some of the top creators in comics explain what it is about comics that attracted them in the first place, and what keeps them interested in the medium year after year. Specifically, I asked, "Why comics? Why not write novels or screenplays, or draw storyboards or commercial art, or produce 'Fine Art'?" I started out with the two writer/artists primarily responsible for the creation of the new **Legend** imprint, **John Byrne** and **Frank Miller**.

Byrne, creator/writer/artist of ***Next Men*** and the new ***Danger Unlimited*** series, had this to say about why he loves comics: "Producing a comic book—writing and drawing one on your own—is a lot like making a movie for which you design all of the sets, play all of the parts, *and* get to direct. The advantage is that you have actors who never miss their cues. I'd say having that control is a major reason I work in comics."

Miller, creator/writer/artist of ***Sin City*** and the co-creator/writer of the upcoming ***Martha Washington Goes to War*** and ***The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot*** series, echoed Byrne's comments regarding control of his own creations: "I grew up reading and loving comics, and I loved to write and draw my own. I knew from when I was young that comics were what I wanted to do. One of the most enjoyable things about comics is the amazing amount of freedom you have compared to other mediums. Plus, it's an egomaniac's dream to be in control of the whole production."

Obviously, there is a great deal to be said for having the freedom to pursue one's own vision without having it diluted or altered by others. But what about those creators who, for one reason or another, choose to work as part of a collaborative team as either a writer or an artist? I tracked down a couple of top writers, **Chris Claremont** and **Steven Grant**, to get their points of view.

Claremont, whose work can be seen every other month in ***Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species***, had this to say about what first attracted him to comics: "I started out writing prose and wandered into comics after the fact. It looked like it was a lot of fun, and seemed like the next best thing to making movies. Working in comics has some of the same excitement as improvisational theater—or a tennis game. The interaction between writer and artist is very visceral and immediate. Writing prose, you work alone."

Grant, who is writing ***X*** and the upcoming miniseries ***Enemy***, took things a bit further in explaining the differences between comics and prose, and comics and motion pictures: "I like the visual aspects of comics, but I also like the literary, or prose aspects. Comics are a very strange form—a combination of words and pictures, not one or the other. When you're writing comics, you're required to think visually, but the finished work is not simply visual. It's a unique balance between prose and picture that you don't find in any other medium, and it allows for a whole different level of expression.

"A lot of people think comics are 'movies on paper,' and that's dead wrong. They're something unique all to themselves, and I believe the medium itself is still in the process of defining itself—still in the process of being born."

To get an artist's perspective, I went to **Cam Kennedy**, the artist on ***Star Wars: Dark Empire***, and the recently released *Batman/Judge Dredd: Judgment on Gotham*. Kennedy touched on the same pleasures to be found in collaboration as Chris Claremont, but he also brought up an aspect that directly involves you, the comics reader: "I worked as a painter in France for seven years, and dearly loved it. But when I came back to Scotland, I got involved with comics and found it was a wonderfully fast medium for me to turn the ideas inside my head into something tangible. Comics also gave me a chance to work with people who would come up with ideas that seemed completely irrational—until you began to think about them and put them on paper, and discovered that they could work.

"Another thing I've always loved is the feedback from fans. Comics give people an awful lot of pleasure, and meeting fans at conventions allows you to see that firsthand. To get that kind of feedback from doing a professional job is a great thing."

He's absolutely right, you know. Your comments to creators, either face to face at conventions, or through the mail, are a way to bring the interactive nature of comic books full circle, from creator to reader to creator. So complete the circle, write to your favorite comics creator(s). Get out there and interact.

—Randy Stradley
creative director

FEB. CHECKLIST

SHIPPING FEBRUARY 1
- ☐ ROBOCOP: ROULETTE #3

SHIPPING FEBRUARY 8
- ☐ ATLAS #1
- ☐ CARAVAN KIDD VALENTINE'S DAY SPECIAL #1
- ☐ DARK HORSE PRESENTS #82
- ☐ NINA'S NEW & IMPROVED ALL-TIME GREATEST COLLECTORS' ITEM CLASSIC COMICS #1
- ☐ OUT OF THE VORTEX #5
- ☐ THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD: ETERNAL VOWS #3
- ☐ VERSION #2.7

SHIPPING FEBRUARY 15
- ☐ AGE OF REPTILES #4
- ☐ ALIENS: VOLUME 2 #21 (U.K. EDITION)
- ☐ ALIENS: MUSIC OF THE SPEARS #2
- ☐ DARK HORSE INSIDER #28
- ☐ GRENDEL TALES: DEVIL'S HAMMER #1
- ☐ INDIANA JONES AND THE ARMS OF GOLD #1
- ☐ THE MARK #3
- ☐ MAX OVERLOAD #1
- ☐ STAR WARS: TALES OF THE JEDI #5

SHIPPING FEBRUARY 22
- ☐ CATALYST: AGENTS OF CHANGE #1
- ☐ COLORS IN BLACK #1
- ☐ DANGER UNLIMITED #1
- ☐ DARK HORSE COMICS #18
- ☐ ENEMY #3
- ☐ THE GEOF DARROW PRINT SERIES #2: HARD BOILED
- ☐ HELLHOUNDS #1
- ☐ PREDATOR: BAD BLOOD #2
- ☐ THE SHADOW: IN THE COILS OF THE LEVIATHAN #3

SHIPPING MARCH 1
- ☐ CLASSIC STAR WARS #17
- ☐ INDIANA JONES: THUNDER IN THE ORIENT #6
- ☐ RACK & PAIN #1
- ☐ ROBOCOP: ROULETTE #4
- ☐ SIN CITY: A DAME TO KILL FOR #4
- ☐ X #2

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